

# My Dear Beloved Son or Daughter

By

Imam Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali  
(May God Shower His Mercy Upon Him)

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### TRANSLATOR'S NOTE:

The English translator has added all explanations given within square brackets and parenthesis and assumes all responsibilities for any mistranslations and seeks Allah's forgiveness for that. All text in Arabic has been transliterated into English and has been italicized. For doing the English translations of the verses from the Holy Quran, some help has been sought from the English translation of Quran by famous European Muslim scholar Muhammad Asad called "The Message of the Qur'an". The Urdu translation, used for doing this English translation, has been published by Dar-al Isha'at, Pakistan.

## INTRODUCTION OF THE BOOK

It has been learned that one of the students of Imam Ghazali (*Rahmatullahi Alayhe* [RA – May Allah shower His mercy upon him]), who acquired a lot of knowledge and spiritual benefits from him over a number of years, had a thought in his heart. He thought that he spent a lot of time learning from Imam Ghazali (RA) over a number of years from different branches of religious knowledge and gave a lot of sacrifices towards that end. However, he still did not know which branch of knowledge from among the branches of knowledge he studied, would be of real help to him, would illumine his grave, would be beneficial to him on the Day of Judgment and which branches of knowledge would not be of benefit to him on the Day of Judgment, so that he could refrain from those branches of knowledge because the Holy Prophet Muhammad (May Peace and Blessings of Allah be Upon him) said:

“*A’auzu Billahi Min ‘Ilm-il La Yanfa’au*”.

“I seek Allah’s refuge from the knowledge which is of no benefit”.

This disciple of Imam Ghazali (RA) kept thinking along these lines for a few days and then wrote a letter to Imam Ghazali with the view of getting an answer to his dilemma along with some other questions. Furthermore, he asked in his letter to Imam Ghazali (RA) for some advice and to teach him a supplication that he could always recite. He wrote in his letter that although Imam Ghazali (RA) has written numerous books on this issue such as “*Ahya al-Uloom ad-Deen*” (Revival of the Knowledge of the Path to God), “*Kimiya as-Sa’ada*” (Alchemy of the Ultimate Success and Happiness), “*Jawahir ul-Quran*” (Priceless Gems of the Holy Quran), “*Arba’een*” (Forty Steps), “*Minhaj ul ‘Aabedeen ila Jannatu Rabbul ‘Aalameen*” (Best Way for the Worshippers of God Leading them Towards the Paradise of the Lord of All Universes), etc., this weak individual is in need of something that he could always study and always act upon its injunctions. In reply to his letter, Imam Ghazali (RA) sent him the following advices.

## IMAM GHAZALI'S RESPONSE TO THE LETTER

In the Name of Allah (God), the Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful.

All praises belong to Allah alone, the Lord of all the universes and blessings and peace of Allah be upon His messenger Muhammad and on all of his descendents and followers.

My dear beloved son and true friend!

May Allah, the Exalted, grant you a long life for His worship and obedience and may He enable you to walk on the path of His beloveds. You should know that the fountain of all good counsel is the holy existence of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) because the constitution of all counsel is based on his *Ahadith* (traditions) and *Sunnah* (outward character and conduct as well as internal states). Every counsel (advice) contrary to his *Ahadith* (traditions) and *Sunnah* (outward character and internal states) will be of no benefit. Countless accounts of advices have been written and told in the light of the *Ahadith* (traditions) and *Sunnah* (outward character and internal states) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). If you have received any guidance from them then you do not need any advice from me. However, if you have not received any counsel from the counsels of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then tell me, in all these years, what knowledge have you acquired from me? My dear beloved son! Among the counsels of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), is the counsel:

*“‘Alamatu l’radiAllahi ‘Anil ‘Abdi Ishtighaluhu Bima La Ya’nehe Wa Inimra’un Zahabut Sa’atuhu Min ‘Umrihi Fi Ghairi Ma Yukhlaq Lahu Lihariyyun Ayyatula ‘Alaeyhe Hasratun.”*

“A servant of Allah’s involvement in useless things is an indication that Allah has removed His special favors from him/her (or has removed him/her from His Grace). And if the servant is spending even a moment from his/her life on things other than for which Allah has created him/her for, then it’s a matter of great sorrow.”

Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has furthermore said:

*“Mun Jaawazal Arba’eena Sinatu Wa Lam Yughlab Khairuhu ‘Ala Sharrehi Fal Yatajahhaza Ilan Nari.”*

“An individual whose state, even after forty (40) years of age, is such that good in him/her does not prevail over the evil in him/her, then [this individual] should get ready to go to Hell.”

My dear beloved son! It’s very easy to give this advice to all the people of the whole world but it’s very difficult to act upon it oneself. It’s because, those in whose hearts the pleasures of the world and following of their desires [from the lower self] dominate, they find the advice and guidance bitter. These people’s hearts are trapped in the worldly desires and pleasures. In this respect, this individual is worthy of special mention, which learns wisdom, philosophy and worldly learning like that and thinks that this knowledge will be a cause of salvation for him/her in the life hereafter along with earning for him/her fame and prestige in the world. He/she thinks that it’s not necessary to act on this knowledge and that he/she is exempt from acting upon it. This belief, which is wrong, is of those who study philosophy. All Glory and Honor to Allah the Great. This individual does not even know this much that the knowledge that he/she acquires on which he/she does not even act upon, will be a reason for punishment for him/her on the Day of Judgment. Does this person not know that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

“*Inna Ashaddan Nasi ‘Azabun Yaumal Qiyamati ‘Alimu Lum Yunfa’huAllahu Bi ‘Ilmihi.*”

“On the Day of Judgment, the most severe torment will be given to the scholar (person of knowledge) to whom Allah had not benefited from his/her knowledge (i.e. he/she did not act upon the acquired knowledge).”

It has been narrated in the traditions of the intimates (friends/saints) of Allah, that one saint saw Shaykh Junaid Baghdadi (RA) in his dream after his death and asked him:

“O Abu al-Qasim! Inform me about your state after your death!”

Shaykh Junaid Baghdadi (RA) responded:

“Worships and signs (*Isharaat*) all turned out to be useless. But some *Rak’at* (cycles) of prayers I did at the time of *Tahajjud* (third part of the night) were of benefit.”

My dear beloved son! Do not be deprived of good deeds, do not be without the knowledge of the external matters (*Shari’ah*), and do not be without internal excellences (noble inner qualities). Have firm certitude that only knowledge without good deeds will not benefit you on the Day of Judgment. You can understand this [important] point from the example that if someone is passing through a jungle or desert holding ten sharp swords, good arches along with some other weapons, and knowing the art of war and method of using these weapons and all of a sudden is confronted by a lion. Tell me, can this person be saved without using these weapons? You know very well that this person cannot be saved. Likewise, you should know that if someone knows hundred thousand points of knowledge (or *Fiqh*/legal issues) but does not act on them then this knowledge will be of no benefit to this person.

Second example is of a person who is sick and knows that his/her cure lies in such and such medicines but does not use these medicines, and then will the knowledge of medicines and of their ability to cure his/her illness is of any help in actually curing the illness [of this person]? You can understand it quite well that merely having the knowledge of wisdom cannot cure the [spiritual/inner] diseases. A poet has said that even if you take (buy) two thousand pounds of wine you will not be intoxicated until you drink from it.

Acquiring a lot of knowledge and continually browsing a lot of books but not acting upon that knowledge will not be of any benefit to you unless and until you make yourself deserving of Allah’s mercy through deeds of righteousness. Until then, the Grace of Allah will stay away from you. Listen, Quran says the following in this respect:

“*Wa Anna Laeysa Lil Insaani illa Maa Sa’aa*”

“Human beings will get only what they have strived for.”

This proves that human beings can achieve success only after struggling and striving. My dear beloved son! I know that you might have read that this verse of Quran was abrogated. I suppose that this verse was abrogated but what do you say about the following two verses:

“*Famaey Ya’mal Mithqaala Zarratin Khairaey Yarahu Wa Maey Ya’mal Mithqaala Zarratin Sharraey Yarahu.*”

“And so, the one who shall have done an atom’s weight of good, shall see it, and the one who shall have done an atom’s weight of evil, shall see it.” (Quran, 99:7-8)

*“Famun Kana Yurju Liqaa-a Rabbihi Fal Ya’mal ‘Amalun Salihun.”*

“Hence, whoever looks forward [with hope and awe] to meeting his/her Lord [on the Day of Judgment], let him/her do righteous deeds, and let him/her not ascribe unto anyone or anything a share in the worship due to his/her Lord.” (Quran, 18:110)

*“Innal Lazina Aamano Wa ‘Aamaylus Sawlihaatey Kaanat Lahum Jannaatul Firdausee Nuzula Khalideena Feeha.”*

“Verily, those who believe in Allah and perform righteous deeds, for them the highest Paradise is for their hospitality in which they will live forever.”

At another place (in Quran), Allah the Exalted has said:

*“Illa mun Taaba Wa Aamana Wa ‘Aamila ‘Aamalun ‘Sawlihun.”*

“Except for those who repented [from their sins and wrongdoings] and believed and performed righteous deeds.”

And what do you say about the following holy *Ahadith* (traditions of Prophet Muhammad [May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him])?

*“Buniyal Islamu ‘Ala Khamsin Shahadatu Al La Ilaha IllAllahu Wa Iqamus Salaata Wa Eetaa-uz Zakaata Wa Saumu Shahre Ramadana Wa Hijjul Baeyta ManIstata-a Ilaeyhi Sabeela.”*

“Islam’s foundations are on five things: to testify that there is none worthy of worship (or Lordship) other than Allah and Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is His messenger, to establish regular prayers (*Salaat*), to pay the *zakaat* (obligatory charity), to fast in the holy month of Ramadan, and to perform Hajj (pilgrimage to the House of God) if one possesses the capacity (financial and physical) to do so.”

*“Al Imanu Iqrarum Bil Lisaaney Wa Tasdeequm Bil Janaaney Wa ‘Aamalum Bil Arkaaney.”*

“*Iman* (faith) is to testify with tongue, and to certify with one’s heart, and to act on the teachings (of Islam)”.

After the explanation of this truth, if you get the thought in your heart that I am saying that a slave [of God, i.e., a human being] will go to Paradise not on the basis of Allah’s Grace but on the basis of his/her own [good] deeds, then you should understand that you have not understood what I said. On contrary, what I am saying is that a slave will enter Paradise because of Allah’s Favor, Generosity, and Blessings. However, unless the slave makes himself/herself deserving of Allah’s Mercy through his/her worship and servitude (obedience), until then he/she will not be entitled to Allah’s Mercy and Favor. I am not narrating this fact instead Allah, the Exalted, is saying:

*“Inna Rahmata Allahi Qareebum Minal Muhsineen.”*

“Verily, the Mercy of Allah is close to the doers of good.”

It means, how a slave [of God] will enter Paradise without the Mercy of Allah, the Exalted? I repeat this [important point], how will a slave enter into the Paradise [without Allah’s Mercy]? But if someone says that one will enter into the Paradise because of one’s faith (*Iman*) then there are many difficult valleys (obstacles) in front. Among them, the first difficult way (obstacle) is to safely take with oneself one’s faith (*Iman*).

My dear beloved son! Have the conviction that unless and until you work, you will not get the pay (or compensation of your work). There was man from among the Children of Israel who used to excessively worship Allah. Allah sent an angel to him to test him who said:

“Allah, the Holy, says that you put yourself in trouble for no use since your worship is not accepted by Him and you will go to Hell.”

Hearing this message from the angel, the righteous man replied:

“Allah, the Exalted, has created us for His worship and servitude and our job is to serve Him [no matter what] and He is the Owner [of each and everything and everyone including myself] and the Powerful One.”

Then this angel appeared in the Presence of Allah, the Exalted, and said:

“O my Lord! You are the Knower to the secrets of this universe and You also know what Your worshipper slave has replied.”

On this Allah, the Exalted, said:

“If this slave of Ours does not turn his face away from Our worship and servitude, then We will also not turn Our Face away from him.”

*“Ishhadu Ya Malaikatey Anni Qad Ghafartu Lahu.”*

“O My angels! All of you be [My] witnesses that I have forgiven him.”

My dear beloved son! Listen to what the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says:

*“Haasibu Qabala Un Tuhasabu Wa Zinu Qabala Un Tuuzanu.”*

“Take accounts of your selves (i.e. judge and correct your selves) before you will be taken into accounts [on the Day of Judgment] and weigh your deeds (i.e. critically self-analyze and correct the shortcomings in your deeds) before your deeds will be weighed (judged then punished or rewarded on the Day of Judgment).”

Ali (May Allah bless his countenance) said:

*“Mun Zanna Annahu Bidunil Juhdi Yasilu Fahuwa Mutminun Wa Mun Zanna Annahu Bibazlil Juhdi Yasilu Fahuwa Mut’ibun.”*

“A person who thinks that he/she will go to the Paradise without (righteous) deeds is misguided and the person who thinks that he/she will go to the Paradise only through striving is merely busy with hard work.”

Shaykh Hasan Busri (May Allah shower His Mercy upon him) says:

*“Talabul Jannati Bila ‘Amalin Zambum Minaz Zunubi.”*

“To desire Paradise without good deeds is a sin from among the sins.”

Another intimate of Allah says:

*“Al Haqiqatu Terku Mulahizatil ‘Amali La Terkul ‘Amali.”*

“The reality [of knowledge] is that one acts on it (i.e. knowledge) without admiring it (i.e. one’s good actions), however one should not stop performing [good] deeds [even if there is a danger of one admiring one’s own good deeds].”

Our master of the two worlds (in this life and in the life hereafter), Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says in a much better, clear, pure, and beautiful way compared to the above sayings:

*“Al Kayyeyisu Mun Daana Nafsahu Wa ‘Amila Lima Ba’dal Mauti Wal Ahmaqu Manit Taba’a Nafsahu Hawaha Wa Tamanna ‘Ala Allahi Illa Mani Wafi Riwayati ‘Ala Allahil Mughfirati.”*

“Intelligent is the one who subdued his/her *Nafs* (self, i.e., evil desires and inclinations of the lower self) and performed [good pious] actions for the life hereafter and mindless (stupid) is the one who subdued his/her *Nafs* to pleasures, greed, and [evil and vain] desires and thought that Allah is with him/her.” In some (*Hadith*) traditions it says: “[This mindless person] hopes for Allah’s forgiveness.”

My dear beloved son! You stayed awake at nights to continually rehearse (memorize/repeat) knowledge and sacrificed your sleep to study it. If your intention was to gain worldly (material) benefits and worldly prestige and status then:

*“Fawailul Laka Thumma Wailul Laka.”*

“There is sadness (woe) for you and again there is sadness (woe) for you.”

However, if your intentions were to establish (strengthen first in yourself and then in the rest) the Path to God (*Deen*) brought by Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), attaining moral uplift and civilization, and eliminating evil from your self then:

*“Fatuba Laka Thumma Tuba Laka.”*

“For you is the happiness and blessings and again for you is the happiness and blessings.”

*“Sahrul ‘Uyuna Bighairi Wajhika Sana ay’un Wa Baka uhunna Bighairi Faqdika Batilun”*

“[O my Lord!] The wakefulness of the eyes, except for beholding [the beauty of] Your Countenance, is useless.

And unless it’s for [the sorrow of being separate from] You, the weeping (tears) of the eyes for someone [or something] else [other than You O Lord!] is gravely wrong.”

A tradition (*hadith* of Prophet Muhammad [May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him]) says:

*“‘Ishu Ma Shay’ta Fa Innaka Mayyeytu Wahbib Ma Shay’ta Fa Innaka Mufariqatun Wa’mil Ma Shay’ta Fa Innaka Tujza Bihi.”*

“[O Human Being!] Spend your life the way you like but [keep in mind that one day] you will die, and love whoever you like but [keep in mind that one day you] will get separated from him/her, and perform deeds the way you like but [keep in mind that one day] you will surely get their just compensation [good or bad depending on your deeds].”

What benefit have you derived for yourself and what have you achieved from studying knowledge, i.e., knowledge of argumentation (*Ilmul Kalaam*), social values (*Ilmul Ikhlaq*), medicine (*Ilmut Tib*), astrology (*Nujoom*), linguistics, poetry, conducting wars, etc.? What benefit have you obtained other than wasting your life and gaining worldly fame? I have read in Prophet ‘Isa’s (Jesus [Peace of Allah be upon him]) Gospel (*Injil*) that between the time the corpse (dead body of a human being) is placed in a casket and brought to the grave, Allah, the



Exalted, asks the corpse forty (40) questions with His Power. In the first question Allah, the Exalted, asks:

*“’Abdi Qad Tahherta Munzaral Khalqi Sineena Fahul Tahherta Munzari Sa’atun.”*

“O My Slave! You decorated (beautified) yourself [with knowledge of outward matters] for many years to show off to the [mortal] creations [of Mine]. But for My sake only, did you ever purified your heart [from evil and heedlessness] even for a moment?”

[Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said in an authentic tradition: “Allah does not Look at your faces and your bodies but Looks at your hearts (the state it’s in, what goes into it, and what transpires into it, therefore it’s extremely important to purify the heart which is forever in Allah’s Sight).]

My dear beloved son! Everyday, the Voice of Allah resonates in your heart:

*“’Abdi Ma Tasna’u Bighairi Wa Anta Majfufum Bikhairi.”*

“O My slave! Why do you worship [Me] for show off and ostentation, even though the good and the bad [circumstances] are both in My Hands? For this reason, you should worship me [alone] with sincere intention and devotion [and not to impress any of My mortal creations who are not capable of benefiting or harming you even by a little except by My Will].”

My dear beloved son! Knowledge without actions is madness and actions without knowledge are useless. The knowledge that today, does not keep you away from sins and that does not evoke in you the desire to obey Allah, remember, will not save you tomorrow from Hellfire. If you do not perform righteous deeds today and do not make up for the time you wasted in the past then on the Day of Judgment you will be saying:

*“Ferje’yna Na’mal Saaliha.”*

“Send us back [to the world, O our Lord!] so that we [can] perform the righteous deeds.”

Then it will be said to you:

“O you the mindless one! That is where you are coming from.”

My dear beloved son! Create courage in yourself and create movement in your body for struggle [on the Path of God]. Make efforts for performing pious deeds because then you will be going to the grave. Those, who already are in the grave before you, are waiting for you every moment to see when you come to them. Beware! Without fruits (good deeds) do not even get close to them. Abu Bakr Siddiq (May Allah be pleased with him) says:

*“Hazihi Ajsaadu Qafasut Tuyouri Awo Astabalud Dawab.”*

“These bodies are either cages of birds or dwellings of animals.”

So think where you are in? If you are in the cage of birds then when you will listen to “*Irji’I ila Rabbika!*” “Return to your Lord!”, you [will be liberated and] will fly to a very high place to sit.

*“Ihtuzza ‘Arshur Rahmaani Limauti Sa’adibne Muadh.”*

“The Throne of the Compassionate One shook with the death of Sa’ad bin Muadh.”

But God forbid if you are among the animals for whom it has been said:

*“Uulaaika Kal An’aami Bal Hum Adallu.”*

“These people are like animals yet even more misguided.”

Be certain that you will arrive carrying your luggage from the place of *Zawiya* (spiritual retreat) to the place of *Hawiya* (Hell), i.e., from this world to straight to the Hell. Once Shaykh Hasan Busri (May Allah shower His Mercy upon him) was given cold [and sweet] drink. As soon as he took it in his hand he took a sigh and fell unconscious. When he regained consciousness, people asked him what had happened to him. He replied:

*“Zakartu Umniyyata Ahlin Naari Heena Yaquluna Le Ahlil Jannati Un Uufidu ‘Aleyna Minal Ma’i.”*

“I remembered the wish of the inhabitants of Hell when they will plead to the inhabitants of Paradise to give them a little water.”

O beloved! If knowledge without actions had been sufficient for you and if you did not need actions then why Allah, the Exalted, would say at the dawn:

*“Hul Min Ta ibin Hul Min Sa ilin Hul Min Mustaghfirin.”*

“Is there anyone who repents from sins? Is there anyone who asks [Me of anything]? Is there anyone who begs [Me] for forgiveness?”

Then this proclamation of Allah, the Exalted, would have been useless. In fact, this proclamation of Allah, the Exalted, at dawn is for:

*“Kanu Qaleelum Minal Laili Ma Yahja’oon.”*

“There are only a few [slaves of Allah] who sleep little in the last part of the night [right before dawn which is a blessed time for coming close to Allah].”

Once a group of companions were praising Abdullah bin Umar (May Allah be pleased with them both) in front of the Messenger of Allah (May Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) on which the Messenger of Allah (May Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

*“Nay’mur Rajula Huwa Lau Kana Yusalli Bil Laili.”*

“He is a good man. I wish he prayed the *Tahajjud* prayers (optional prayers in the blessed last part of the night before dawn which is indispensable for making spiritual progress in the Path of Allah).”

One day the Messenger of Allah (May Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said to a companion:

*“La Takthirin Nauma Bil Laili Fainna Kathratan Naumi Bil Laili Tad’oo Sahibahu Faqirai Yaumal Qiyamati.”*

“Do not sleep too much at night because the one who sleeps too much at night will be empty handed on the Day of Judgment (i.e. he/she did not avail the opportunity of coming close to Allah through Allah’s remembrance, prayers, and devotions to Allah at night especially in its last part).”

*“Waminal Laili Fatahajjad Bihi Nafilatal Laka.”*

“[O Beloved Prophet! (May Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)] And in [the last] part of the night perform the *Tahajjud* prayers [for the sake of Allah] which will be very beneficial for you.” (Quran)

In the above verse, it's a commandment from Allah to His Prophet (May Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

*“Wa Bil Ashaarihum Yustaghfiroon.”*

“And those [true slaves of Allah] at the time before dawn, plead for Allah’s forgiveness.”  
(Quran)

In the above verse, there is an expression of gratitude [from Allah to such slaves].

*“Wul Mustaghfireena Bil Ashaari.”*

“And those [true slaves of Allah] seek [Allah’s] forgiveness at the time before dawn.” (Quran)

In the above verse, there is a mentioning [of such slaves of Allah].

Our master of both the worlds, the Messenger of Allah (May Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) says:

“Allah, the Exalted, really likes three sounds: of the rooster [that wakes people up for *Tahajjud* prayers], secondly of the recitation of the Holy Quran, and thirdly of those who in the last part of the night plead to Allah, the Exalted, for His forgiveness and repent [to Him].”

Shaykh Sufyan Suri (May Allah shower His Mercy upon him) [who was an intimate of Allah], says:

*“Inna Allaha Ta’ala Khalaqa Reehun Tahabbu Waqtal Ashaari Tahmilul Azkaara Wal Istighfaara Ilal Malikil Jabbari.”*

“Allah, the Exalted, has created a wind, that blows in the last part of the night. At that time, those [slaves of Allah] who engage in Allah’s remembrance and ask [Allah for His] forgiveness, their voices are presented [by this wind] to the Court of Allah, the Exalted.”

Shaykh Sufyan Suri (May Allah shower His Mercy upon him) has also said:

“When the night begins, an angel from beneath the Throne (of Allah) makes the proclamation that all the worshippers should wake up, so those who are granted *Tawfiq* (good fortune/capability) by Allah get up and start praying. In the middle of the night, a second angel makes the proclamation that all obedient and respectful slaves of Allah should get up. Thus they get up and continue to pray until *Sehr* (the last blessed part of the night). When it’s time for *Sehr* then a third angel makes the proclamation that all those who seek Allah’s forgiveness should get up. Thus they get up and seek Allah’s forgiveness. When it’s time for dawn, then a fourth angel makes the proclamation ‘O you the heedless ones! Get up [the day break has come]!’ Then these people get up from their beds like the dead will get up from their graves [upon resurrection on the Day of Judgment].”

My dear beloved son! It has been told in the will of Luqman (Peace of Allah be upon him) that he, advising his son in his will, said:

*“Ya Buneyya La Takununnad Deeku Akyas Minka Fainnahu Yunaadi Bil Ashaari Wa Anta Na’imun.”*

“My son! Do not let the rooster be more intelligent than you are. It shouldn’t happen that he (i.e. the rooster) gets up at the last part of the night to make proclamations [for *Tahajjud* prayers and

remembers his Lord] while you keep sleeping [in a deep sleep of heedlessness, carelessness, and ignorance].”

This reality is made clear in the following verses (of poetry):

“*Laqad Hatafet Fi Junhil Laili Hamamatun*  
*‘Ala Funanin Wahnun Wa Inni Na’imun*

*Kazabtu Wa Baitil Allahi Lau Kuntu ‘Ashiqan*  
*Lama Sabaqatni Bil Buqa’il Hamaaimun*

*Wa Az’amu Anni Haa’imun Zu Sababatin*  
*Lahu Bi Wa La Abki Wa Tabkil Bahaaimun.”*

“At night, the dove sitting on the branch [of a tree] is calling on [to its Lord]  
While I am in a deep sleep

By the Lord of the House of Allah (*Ka’aba*)! I am a liar! If I had been a true lover [of Allah]  
Then the doves would not have won over me in weeping [in the pain of separation from my  
Beloved (Allah)]

Alas! I do not even wet my eyes [with tears] while claiming to love [my Beloved Lord!]  
While the animals keep weeping [in their love for their Creator].”

My dear beloved son! Our purpose is that you should know what obedience and worship are. Obedience and worship are to follow the *Shari’ah* (law) of Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then whether the commandments are for performing the righteous deeds or for restraining oneself from evil or whether [the commandments] are for following his words or deeds, in other words, whether you do something or not do something, whether you say something or not say something, all these must be in accordance with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). If you say something then say it according to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). If you keep silent then be silent according to the commandments of Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). If you do something or do not do something then do it in accordance with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). If you do something and you consider it an act of worship but you do not do it to obey the commandment of Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then this will not be counted as worship but instead will be counted as a sin even though it might be prayer or fasting. Do you not know that if someone fasts on the [first] day of the two *Eids* (i.e. two foremost Islamic celebrations) or on the days of *Hajj* (pilgrimage) then this person will be committing sin? Even though it is fasting but since it’s not done in accordance with the commandment of Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that’s why this person is being sinful. Similarly, if someone performs prayers at a forbidden time (e.g. after *Asr* [late afternoon] prayer but before sunset or after *Fajr* [dawn] prayer but before sometime after sunrise, etc.) or at an illegally occupied place then he/she will be called *Athim* (sinner) and *Fasiq* (law breaker). Even though it apparently looks like [a legitimate act of] worship but since it was not done in accordance with the guidance of Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), it is not correct. If a husband has relations with his wife then it is not a sin even though it apparently looks bad. However, since it is done in accordance with the guidance of Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) therefore it is *Halal* (permissible or

within legal limits). Therefore, it is known [now] that worship is the second name (synonym) of obedience (i.e. worship means obedience).

Similarly, prayers and fasting are counted as worship when they are performed in accordance with the [Divine] guidelines. Therefore, my dear beloved son! All of your words and deeds should be in accordance with the commandments of Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). That is, whatever actions you perform and conversations you have should be in accordance with the *Shari'ah* (Divine law), because whatever the knowledge and actions of [God's] creations, not in accordance with the *Shari'ah* (Divine law), are clearly misguided and keep them (i.e. creations/human beings primarily) away from the truth. This is the reason why Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) abrogated all [religious] learning from the previous eras.

Therefore, you should not do anything without the guidance of Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and be certain that you cannot walk (move forward) on the Path of Allah, the Exalted, with [merely] the knowledge that you have acquired. However, this Path [of God] must be traveled through hard work and *Mujahadah* (intense inner spiritual struggle and exercises) and the pleasures of the self and desires [from the lower self] must be cut (wiped out) with the sword of *Mujahadah* (intense inner spiritual struggle and exercises). These desires of the lower self cannot be eliminated through immoralities and through the deceptions of false Sufis (i.e. those who claim to be Sufis [True Sufis are those who possess an intimate relationship with God due to the emergence of purified souls after they wiped out evil from the deepest recesses of their souls through *Mujahada* – spiritual struggles] but in reality they are not, they are simply speaking the words of Sufis and acting like them on the outside while being hollow and devious from the inside). Allah, the Exalted, does not like fine points, i.e., depths of philosophy, and dark times, i.e., a life engulfed in sin (evil and immorality). The tongue speaking the words of deep wisdom and beauty while the heart worshipping heedlessness [from God] and desires of the lower self, this is a sign of mighty misfortune.

Unless you cut (eradicate) the desires (inclinations and tendencies) of the lower self with the sword of truth and *Mujahada* (intense inner spiritual struggle and exercises), until then the light (illumination) of *Ma'arifah* (deep intimate knowledge, understanding, consciousness, awareness, relationship with Allah) will not be born in your heart.

My dear beloved son! You have asked [me] about some [spiritual] issues, among which, some cannot be described completely in writing and speech. When you reach that [high spiritual enlightenment] state then you will know them yourself. The lesson of love is not taught but it's born and learned by itself. If you reach that [high spiritual] state then knowing [these issues] will be equivalent to moving from one [spiritual] state to another (*Mustahilaat*). Because *Ishq* (intense love) is another name for love and intense desire to seek what one loves (*Zauq*). Love and *Zauq* (intense desire to seek what one loves) can neither be described in speech nor in writing and its spirit (meaning) cannot be presented. Just like sweetness, sourness, and bitterness cannot be described by anyone who wants to describe them in writing or speech. Therefore, let it be known, that if you reach this destination [of high spiritual station/enlightenment] then you will know [all this] by yourself. But if you are not able to reach this destination [of high spiritual station] then the truth can be described to some extent in writing and speech.

My dear beloved son! Some of your questions are such that to whatever extent they could be addressed in writing and speech, have been answered in my book *Ahya al-Uloom ad-Deen* (Revival of the Knowledge of the Path to God) and in other books in detail that you can read. However, they will be explained here too, in a concise way *Inshallah* (God-willing).

Secondly, you have asked what is essential for those walking on the Path of Allah, the Exalted (i.e. the seekers of Allah). [**First condition** is that] You should have the knowledge that the first thing that should be present [in a seeker of Allah] is the belief of fear of Allah to such an extent that a seeker does not get involved in an innovation (*bid'a*, i.e., a matter which is contrary to the established principles of Quran and *Sunnah* [teachings, actions, outward conduct and inner states of Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) such as contentment, patience, gratitude, certitude in God, intimate relationship with God, *Ma'arifah* (deep intimate knowledge and recognition of God), intense love of God, etc.)). The **second condition** is that true and complete repentance (*Taubatun Nasuh*) should be done in such a way that [a seeker of Allah] will not return to this humiliation [of sins]. The **third condition** is that even enemies should be kept satisfied to such an extent that none of the creations has any obligation left on him/her. The **fourth condition** is that one [a seeker of Allah] should acquire [enough knowledge] from the knowledge of *Shari'ah* (Divine law) so that through it, he/she will be able to follow and obey the commandments of Allah, the Exalted [that are obligatory on him/her]. It is not an obligation to learn from the knowledge of *Shari'ah* (Divine law) anymore than that. From other branches of knowledge one should learn to the extent that is obligatory on him/her. This fact should be in your knowledge that it has been narrated in the traditions of the intimates of Allah (saints) that Shibli (May Allah shower His Mercy upon him) said:

“I served 400 spiritual masters and guides and I adopted (acted on) only one out of the 4000 *Ahadith* (traditions) of Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that they narrated and left the rest of the *Ahadith* (traditions). It's because, when I deliberated on this one *Hadith* (tradition), then I found my salvation in this one *Hadith* (tradition). I found in this one *Hadith* (tradition) the knowledge of all who came first and all who came last:

*'Aymal Lid Dunya Be Qadre Maqamika Feeha Wa'mal Le Akhirateka Be Qadre Baqaa'ika Feeha Wa'mal Lillahi Be Qadre Hajateka Ilaeyhe Wa'mal Lin Naari Be Qadre Sabrika Alaeyha.'*  
 ‘Work for the world (or worldly life) as much as you live in it and work for the life hereafter as much as you want to live there and work for Allah, the Exalted, as much as you are in need of Him and work for the Hell as much as you can be patient with its pain and sufferings.’ ”

My dear beloved son! It is known from this *Hadith* (tradition) that you do not need much knowledge because to study knowledge more and to acquire it more is *Fard Kifayah* (i.e. it is an obligation on the entire Muslim community and this communal obligation is discharged when a group of people from within the community do it, but if there is no one doing it in the community then the entire community will be sinful for not discharging the Divine obligation). Pay special attention to this next tradition so that you will attain [a high level of] certitude:

**A TRADITION:** It is said that among the students and *mureeds* (disciples who seek spiritual elevation/enlightenment through the attainment of purification of their soul from all evil desires and tendencies under the guidance of a spiritual guide who has in turn completely attained this purification and high station before Allah through training, guidance, and proximity of another spiritual guide) of Shaykh Shafeeq Balkhi (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him), was a student and disciple named Hatim Ism (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him who in turn later on became a great spiritual master through the training and guidance of Shaykh Shafeeq). One day Shaykh Shafeeq Balkhi (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him) said to him:

“O Hatim! For how long have been in my company (spiritual proximity) and have been listening to what I have been saying (teaching)?”

Shaykh Hatim Ism (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him) replied: “Thirty Three years!”

Shaykh Shafeeq Balkhi asked:

“In that [long] time period, what benefit have you derived from me?”

Shaykh Hatim Ism (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him) responded:

“[I have] obtained eight (8) benefits [from you].”

Shaykh Shafeeq Balkhi (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him) responded:

*“Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaeyhe Raji’oon.”*

“To Allah we belong and to Him shall we return (it’s a supplication from Quran that is made at times of loss and grief).”

Shaykh Shafeeq Balkhi (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him) then said:

“O Hatim! I have spent my lifetime in teaching and training and you have just gained eight benefits from me!”

Shaykh Hatim Ism (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him) replied:

“O my teacher! If you asked [me] for the truth then the reality is what I [just] told you. I do not need any more [benefits] and these benefits from knowledge are quite sufficient because I am certain that I will attain salvation [and success] in this life and in the life hereafter through these eight benefits.”

Shaykh Shafeeq Balkhi (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him) asked him:

“All right! Tell me what are those eight benefits?”

## **BENEFITS NARRATED BY HATIM BIN ISM (RA)**

“O my teacher! The **first benefit** is that I looked at the people of this world and saw that everyone has a beloved. But these beloveds of the people [of the world] are such that some of them (i.e. the beloveds) are with them (i.e. the people) until their illness that brings death, some of them are with them until death, some of them are with them until they reach their graves, and after burial all the lovers return from there. None of their beloveds go with them in their graves to live with them there and to provide their company [in the darkness, solitude, narrowness, and horror of the grave]. I contemplated on this and said to myself that only that is a good beloved who goes with them in the grave and lives with his/her lover, who will provide the company, who will illuminate the grave, who will be a partner on the Day of Judgment and its destinations (stations that one goes through after burial until the Day of Judgment). I saw that the only beloved who has these [good] qualities is my good (pious/righteous) deeds. After this [determination and awareness], I made my good deeds my beloved so that it goes with me in my grave [when I die], will provide me with its company, will become an illuminated candle in my grave, will be my partner in all stages of life hereafter, and never ever separate away from me.”

Shaykh Shafeeq Balkhi (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him) said:

“Bravo O Hatim! You have told a very good thing. Now narrate the second benefit.”

“O my teacher! The **second benefit** is that I glanced at the people of the world and saw that everyone was following after the pleasures and desires from the *Nafs* (lower self that instructs one to commit evil) and [everyone] is subservient to the desires from the lower self. Upon seeing that, I deliberated on the following holy verse [from Quran]:

*‘Wa Amma Mun Khafa Maqama Rabbihi Wa Nahun Nafsa ‘Anil Hawa Fa Innal Jannata Heyal Mawa.’*

‘But the one who has stood in fear of his/her Sustainer’s Presence, and restrained his/her inner self from the base (low and evil) desires, Paradise will be the place of rest [for this person].’ (Quran, Chapter 79, Verses 40-41)

I developed the certitude that the Wise Quran is correct and the book of Allah is the truth. Then I established a front against my *Nafs* (lower self) and became determined to oppose it. I molded it (i.e. my lower self) in such a shape that I did not fulfill any of its desires until it started to find peace [and satisfaction] in the worship of Allah, the Exalted.”

Shaykh Shafeeq Balkhi (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him) responded:

“May Allah, the Exalted, provide His blessings in your good deeds. Now narrate the third benefit.”

“O my teacher! The **third benefit** is that when I glanced at the people I saw that every person, with great pain and hard work, is busy in accumulating the possessions (money, wealth, goods) of this mortal world and is very happy that he/she has a lot of goods and material possessions. But when I contemplated on the following holy verse from the bounteous Quran:

*‘Ma ‘Indakum Yanfadu Wa Ma ‘IndAllahi Baaqin.’*

‘All that is with you is bound to come to an end, whereas all that, which is with Allah is everlasting.’ (Quran, Chapter 16, Verse 96)

Then whatever [material possessions] I accumulated in the world, I spent it all in Way of Allah by distributing it among pious indigents and beggars so that it (the material possessions that I distributed in the Way of Allah) will get deposited with Allah, the Exalted, as my trust and will become source of immense good and ransom (i.e. salvation) in the life hereafter.”

Shaykh Shafeeq Balkhi (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him) said:

“O Hatim! May Allah grant you His Compensation (reward for your spending in His Way)! You said a very good thing and have done a very good thing. Now narrate the fourth benefit.”

“O my teacher! The **fourth benefit** is that I looked at the people of the world and saw that some of them think that grandeur and honor belong to the nation or tribe (group) that is big and powerful, that’s why they are expressing pride in their tribe (nation or group). Some of them are such that they think that the grandeur is obtained through abundance of wealth, [material] possessions, family and relatives that’s why [some] people are expressing their pride in their wealth and children. Some [people] are such that they think that their grandeur and honor is in displaying anger, beating, killing, murder and pillage and they express their pride in that. Some



[people] are such that they think that their grandeur is in wasteful spending that's why they consider their wasteful spending a source of honor and express their pride in that. But I deliberated on this verse in which Allah, the Exalted, says:

*'Inna Akramakum 'IndAllahi Atqakum.'*

'Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most deeply conscious (i.e. fearful) of Him.' (Quran, Chapter 49, Verse 13)

Therefore this is correct and is the truth and the creations' thoughts are false and wrong conjectures. That's why I adopted *Taqwa* (pious reverence, consciousness, awe, and fear of Allah) so that I get counted as the one with the highest rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted."

Shaykh Shafeeq Balkhi (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him) said:

"O Hatim! May Allah be pleased with you. You have said a very good thing. Now narrate the fifth benefit."

"O my teacher! The **fifth benefit** is that I looked at the people who were complaining about each other. It was found that they were doing all this because of envy, jealousy, and enmity and the main cause of that is [the desire and competition for] greatness, grandeur, [material] possessions, wealth, and knowledge. I contemplated on the following verse from the Holy Quran in which it's said:

*'Nahnu Qasumna Baeynahum Ma'eeshatahum Fil Hayatid Dunya.'*

*'It is We who distribute their means of livelihood (sustenance) among them in the life of this world.'* (Quran, Chapter 43, Verse 32)

Then I thought that Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has appointed the possessions and ranks since the first beginning [of the creation] and no one has any control [or say] in this matter. Therefore, I did not compete or had jealousy with anyone and remained agreed to Allah's distribution [of worldly bounties] and [His appointed] destiny and got along with the whole world [by giving up all jealousies and enmities against God's creations]."

Shaykh Shafeeq Balkhi (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him) said:

"O Hatim! You are saying the truth and you are doing the right thing. Now narrate the sixth benefit."

"O my teacher! The **sixth benefit** is that when I glanced at the people, I saw that every person is having enmity with someone else for some reason. Then I deliberated on the following verse:

*'Innash Shaytana Lakum 'Aduwwun Fettakhizuhu 'Aduwwa.'*

'Verily, *Shaytan* (Satan) is your enemy so treat him as your enemy.' (Quran, Chapter 35, Verse 6)

After that, I developed the certitude that Allah's saying is the truth, I should not have any enmity with anyone other than *Shaytan* (Satan). Since then, I considered Satan as my enemy and did not obey any of his orders. Instead, I developed obedience [of Allah] and followed the commandments of Allah, the Exalted and adopted only His worship and servitude. The correct way is the *Sirat al-Mustaqeem* (the straight path of guidance in which there is no crookedness) as Allah, the Exalted, has Himself said:

*‘Alam A’had Ilaeykum Ya Bani Aadama Al La Ta’budush Shaytana Innahu Lakum ‘Aduwwum Mubeen Wa Ane’buduni Haza Siratum Mustaqeem.’*

‘Have I not obtained this promise from you that O you the Children of Adam! Never ever obey the *Shaytan* (Satan). No doubt, he is your avowed (open) enemy and worship Me alone [because] this is the straight path.’ ”

Shaykh Shafeeq Balkhi (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him) said:

“O Hatim! You did a very good thing and said a very good thing. Now narrate the seventh benefit.”

“O my teacher! The **seventh benefit** is that I looked at the people and saw that every person is preoccupied with his/her livelihood and search for sustenance and is involved in an intense effort. In this regards, he/she is not even differentiating between *Halal* (permissible) and *Haram* (forbidden) but instead, is getting humiliated with doubtful and *Haram* (forbidden) earnings. Then I deliberated on the following verse:

*‘Wa Ma Min Daabbatin Fil Arde Illa ‘AlalAllahi Rizquha.’*

‘And there is no living creature on earth whose sustenance is not the responsibility of Allah.’ (Quran, Chapter 11, Verse 6)

Then I developed the certitude that the Wise Quran is the truth and is correct and that I am also among those living creatures [of God] that are present on earth. So thus, I got engaged in the worship of Allah and developed the certitude that He will bring to me [my] sustenance because He has promised [to provide me with] sustenance.”

Shaykh Shafeeq Balkhi (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him) said:

“You did a very good thing and told a very good thing. Now narrate the eighth benefit.”

“O my teacher! The **eighth benefit** is that when I looked at the people I found that every person’s reliance [or trust] is on someone or something. Some have trust [or rely] on their [material] possessions, some trust [or rely] on other people. Therefore, I pondered on this holy verse in which Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, says:

*‘Wa Maey Yatawakkal ‘AlalAllahi Fahuwa Hasbuhu.’*

‘And for everyone who places his/her trust in Allah, He [alone] is enough [for him/her].’ (Quran, Chapter 65, Verse 3)

*‘Wa Huwa Husbi Wa Nai’mal Wakeel.’*

‘And He is sufficient for me and He is the best Helper.’

[Therefore, I adopted complete reliance on Allah in every matter.]”

When Shaykh Shafeeq Balkhi (May Allah Shower His Mercy upon him) heard these [eight] benefits, he said:

“O Hatim! May Allah grant you His *Tawfeeq* (i.e. enable you to do righteous deeds and to walk on His Path). You have told [us] very good things. I have seen in *Taurat* (Torah), *Injil* (Gospel of Prophet Jesus), *Zabur* (Psalms), and in the praiseworthy differentiator between right and wrong

(i.e. the Holy Quran), that all these books [of God] mention these eight benefits, i.e., all four books in their teachings have told [us] these eight benefits. Whoever acts on these [eight principles] is like as if he/she has acted on all four [holy] books.”

My dear beloved son! You [now] know from these traditions that you do not need a lot of knowledge.

Now let’s return to our explanation and I will tell you the internal (inward) conditions for the student and seeker on the Path of God.

The **fifth condition** that is obligatory on the seeker on the Path of Allah, the Exalted, is that he/she should have a *Shaykh al-Kamil* (the perfected spiritual guide) who guides him/her and removes evil qualities [and morals] from the seeker and replaces them with noble qualities [and morals]. The example of [Shaykh’s spiritual] training is just like that of a farmer who when looking after a crop sees the unnecessary grass that emerged, pulls them out of the crop. Likewise, whatever weeds that pop up in the farm, he (i.e. the farmer) uproots them from the crop and throws them away. Then the farmer puts water and fertilizers in the crop so that the crop grows [better] and develops a good quality. Likewise, in every condition, the traveler on the Path of Allah has no cure or solution but to have a *Murshid al-Kamil* (a true Shaykh or a perfected spiritual guide). Because, Allah, the Exalted, has sent Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to His slaves (human beings) so that he proves to be an illuminated proof (guide) in the Way of Allah and so that he brings people to the Way of Allah, the Exalted. When the Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) departed from this world, he appointed his deputies and caliphs in his place so that they become a proof (*Daleel*) of the Way of Allah, the Exalted, until the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, for the seeker [of God], there should be a perfected spiritual guide (*Shaykh al-Kamil*) who, for the sake of walking on the Path of Allah, is an illuminated proof as a deputy (spiritual heir) of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

## QUALITIES OF A SPIRITUAL GUIDE (SHAYKH)

The heir of Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who is made one’s *Shaykh* (spiritual guide) should be a scholar but every scholar cannot be a *Shaykh al-Kamil* (a perfected spiritual guide). For this work [of guiding people spiritually by purifying their souls and helping them progress with their souls in the Way of Allah] only that person can be qualified who has some specific qualities. Here we briefly narrate some [such] qualities so that every nut head (crazy) and misguided person could not claim to be a *Shaykh* (spiritual guide) [as it is necessary to define these qualities due to the presence of a large number of fake impersonators claiming to be *Shaykhs* whose sole purpose is to deceive people to gain material benefits thus causing great damage to this important aspect of Islam by disillusioning people and misleading many].

I say this that only that person can be a *Shaykh* (spiritual guide) who after having turned his/her face away from the love of the world, [love of] honor, and [love of worldly] ranks, has given the *Bay’a* (a way of promising Allah on the hand of a *Shaykh* to turn away from evil inwardly and outwardly and to excel utmost in the Path of God by obeying God’s commandment, staying away from His prohibitions, and struggling with one’s soul to excel oneself in the Path of God by purifying one’s soul seeking God’s nearness and approval) to a perfected spiritual guide [who in

turn has given the *Bay'a* to his perfected spiritual guide and so on] so that this [spiritual] chain [in this way] goes back all the way to the Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This person must have done all kinds of *Riazat/Mujahada* [spiritual struggles] and has obeyed every commandment of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This person must eat less, sleep less, prays more (performs prescribed five daily prayers along with optional prayers), fasts more, and does a lot of spending [in the Way of God] and charity. This person should have in his/her temperament (inner and outer personality) all good moral qualities and patience, gratitude, certitude [in Allah], generosity, contentment, trustworthiness, tolerance, seriousness [of purpose in life], humility, obedience [to Allah], truthfulness, shyness (modesty, reserve, fear of wrongdoing), dignity (an aura of honor and respect), tranquility, and other qualities like these should be a part of his character and conduct. This person should have acquired a light (illumination) from the lights (illuminations) of Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) so that all evil qualities like miserliness, jealousy, enmity, expectations from the world [and its inhabitants], anger, rebellion, etc., have been eliminated from him and he should not be dependent on anyone for knowledge except for that knowledge which we [specifically] obtain from the Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

These [above] mentioned qualities, among some qualities of perfected spiritual guides and leaders who lead spiritually on the Path of God, are capable of making one a deputy/heir of the Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Following such spiritual guides is the correct way.

## **OBEDIENCE TO A SPIRITUAL GUIDE**

Such spiritual guides are very difficult to find. But if someone has obtained this wealth and this blessing that he/she found such a spiritual guide and this spiritual guide includes him/her among his disciples (*Mureeds*) then it is necessary for this disciple to have outer and inner respect (honor and etiquettes) for his/her spiritual guide.

### **OUTER ETIQUETTES (RESPECT)**

Outer etiquettes [to one's spiritual guide] include that [the disciple] does not argue with him/her and if some argument starts and if he/she thinks that the spiritual guide has forgotten something then he/she should not object to it. The disciple should not stand in place of prayers all the time but when its time for prayers then he/she should go to the place of prayers and perform prayers then. When [the disciple] is done with prayers then he should wrap up the praying mat and should not perform a lot of optional (extra and non-obligatory) prayers in front of the *Shaykh* (spiritual guide) after every [obligatory, i.e., five daily] prayers. Whatever the perfected guide commands, the disciple should obey it to the best of his/her capacity [It is extremely important for everyone to understand here that, of course, a true spiritual guide cannot and will not command a disciple to do something which is *Haram* (forbidden) in the *Shari'ah* (the law of Allah). On contrary, the fake impersonators claiming to be spiritual guides lacking in the aforementioned qualities, can command their disciples to do things that are *Haram* (forbidden)].

### **INNER ETIQUETTES (RESPECT)**

Inner etiquettes [to one's spiritual guide] include that whatever the disciple apparently hears from the *Murshid* (spiritual guide), he/she should not entertain even a small grain of doubt in his/her heart about the *Shaykh's* (spiritual guide) words or deeds otherwise the disciple will be called a hypocrite. If the disciple cannot do that then he/she should abstain from the company of the spiritual guide until his/her inside becomes like his/her outside.

The **sixth condition** is that the disciple (the seeker of truth) refrains from the deceptions of the *Nafs* (the lower self which is a subtle, invisible [to an outer eye yet clearly visible to a person having an inner eye or deep insight], inner presence [or subtle faculty like the soul] that commands one to evil by whispering it into the heart of a person). This is only possible if the seeker abandons the gatherings of the bad-charactered folks and the ignorant people. In this way, the domination of *Shaytan* (Satan) over his/her heart will come to an end and all Satanic (evil) influences will get eradicated from their roots. This Satanic group could be from among the humans or from among the *Jinn* (an invisible creation of God that was created from fire. Satan belongs to this group and he gets his recruits from this group).

The **seventh condition** is that in every situation, [a seeker] should give preference to humility and lack of greed over wealth and should adopt contentment [and satisfaction with the Will of Allah]. These seven things are essential for the traveler on the Path of Allah, the Exalted, and the seeker [of the truth].

## **REALITY OF TASAWWUF (IHSAN, SUFISM, SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE)**

You have asked, what is *Tasawwuf*? *Tasawwuf* is the name of two qualities: First [quality] is that [the slave] should be obedient to Allah, i.e., he/she should be acting on the *Shari'ah* (the outer laws of Islam including obligations, commandments, and prohibitions). And second [quality] is that [the seeker] is the one who is sympathetic and a doer of good towards [all of] Allah's creations [which is not possible without purifying one's soul from all evil qualities and then embellishing one's soul with all good qualities]. One who has perseverance in acting on the *Shari'ah* and has the qualities of [desiring] betterment (true success) for the entire humanity is a "*Sufi*" (this actually is the correct use of this term as opposed to the wrong uses of the term that are prevalent today). Loyalty [and obedience] to Allah is that [the seeker] sacrifices his own happiness for the sake of Allah. Sincerity to [all] people [of the world] is that [the seeker] does not keep relations with the people for his/her own motives [but instead is selfless towards them and performs selfless duty to them] and refrains from selfishness. But instead should dedicate himself/herself for the good (welfare) of [all] the people [of the world], however the condition is that, this welfare should be in accordance with the *Shari'ah* (the Divine laws).

## **REALITY OF SERVITUDE TO GOD**

You have asked, what is servitude? Servitude has three things: First is to obey the commandments of *Shari'ah* (the outer laws of Islam). Second is to be content with the decree and destiny appointed by Allah, the Exalted. Third is to leave one's desires and prerogatives and to be happy with the Desire and Prerogative (Power) of Allah, the Exalted.

## **REALITY OF RELIANCE ON GOD (TAWAKKUL)**

You have also asked, what is reliance on God (*Tawakkul*)? You should know that *Tawakkul* is that, one should have firm belief and certitude in what Allah, the Exalted, has promised. In other words, one should believe that you will surely get whatever Allah, the Exalted, has destined for you. Then if the entire world tries to stop it, it (Allah's Decree for you) cannot be stopped. But for that which is not written in your destiny [by Allah], if you and the entire world make efforts for it, you will never get it.

## REALITY OF SINCERITY TO GOD (*IKHLAS*)

You have also asked, what is sincerity to God (*Ikhlas*)? You should know that *Ikhlas* is that, all of your deeds should be exclusively for the sake of Allah [and His pleasure]. Whatever you do, it should not be for show off (ostentation/*Riya*). When you do good deeds, your heart should not be inclined towards people [to impress them and to gain their praise]. Your heart should not be pleased at the admirations (praises) of the people, nor should [your heart] be grieved at their complaints [or criticisms]. You should know that *Riya* (show off/ostentation) is born out of people's praises and honors and the cure of [the spiritual disease of] *Riya* (show off/ostentation) is that you consider the entire universe subservient to the Power (Control) of Allah, the Exalted, and consider all creations [of Allah] equivalent (similar) to the pebbles and stones, you should understand this that stones do not have the power to bring you either grief or comfort. If you consider all creations like this (i.e. like stones and pebbles) then you will get rid of *Riya* (show off/ostentation). Until you have this belief that the [mortal] creations have power to bring you grief and comfort, then *Riya* (show off/ostentation) will never get out of your heart.

My dear beloved son! Your remaining questions are such that some of them have been addressed in books written by us (i.e. me) which you can see there and some [of your] questions are such that writing their answers is forbidden. So whatever is written, keep putting them into practice so that those matters will be clarified to you, which you do not yet know.

My dear beloved son! After this, whatever matter you find difficult and do not understand, then do not ask [about such matters] other than with the tongue of your heart.

*“Wa Lau Annahum Sabaru Hatta Takhruja Ilaeyhim Lakana Khairal Lahum.”*

“If those people had exercised patience [instead of screaming outside your house] until you (O Prophet Muhammad [Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him]!) yourself had come out [of your house], then it would have been good for them.” (Quran, Chapter 49, Verse 5)

Accept the advice of Khidr (Peace be upon him):

*“Fala Tas-alni ‘Un Shaeyin Hatta Uhdithu Laka Minhu Zikra.”*

“If you want to follow me [O Moses (Peace be upon him)!], then do not question me about anything [that I may do] until I myself mention (explain) it to you.” (Quran, Chapter 18, Verse 70)

Don't hurry! When the time comes you yourself will be told [about such matters] and shown.

*“Sa Urikum Ayate Fala Tusta'jiloon.”*

“We (i.e. Allah) will soon show you our signs, therefore, do not desire to hasten [this matter].”

So don't ask before [the right] time, when you reach that [spiritually elevated] stage then you yourself will see it. Therefore, have this certitude that unless you go towards this destination, until then you will not reach there nor will you be able to see.

*“Awalum Yaseeru Fil Arde Fayanzuru.”*

“Have they not toured the earth so that they would see [everything].”

My dear beloved son! By Allah! If you illuminate your heart [by purifying it by removing from it the darkness of evil] then certainly you will see amazing things. You should strive with your utmost in every step [of the way towards your destination]. Other than that, the purpose will not be achieved.

Shaykh Zun Noon Misri (May Allah shower His Mercy upon him) said something so good to a student of his from among his students:

*“In Qadarta ‘Ala Buzlir Ruhi Fata’ala Wa illa Tushtaghil Bi Nazahatis Sufiyyati Wal Qaal.”*

“If you have the courage to exert your utmost [with your soul in this way] then come [and step in this way] otherwise do not just get indulged in the nice things that Sufis say.”

My dear beloved son! I will now end my explanation on [following] eight admonitions (advices).

## **EIGHT ADMONITIONS**

Among these [eight admonitions], you have to do four of them and you do not do four of them so that your knowledge does not become your enemy on the Day of Judgment. First, those four things will be mentioned that you should not do.

### **1. PRINCIPLES OF DEBATE**

Firstly, as much as it's possible you should not have [religious] debates with everyone and do not argue with anyone on any [religious or non-religious] issue because there are many [hidden] calamities (harms) in it and has more harms than benefits. This work (debates and arguments) is the fountainhead (source) of all evil things such as ostentation (show off/*Riya*), jealousy, arrogance, resentment, enmity, pride, egoism, etc. If an argument starts between you and someone else [about an issue] and you desire the truth to prevail then your intention to argue in this matter is said to be correct. In this regards, there are two indications (signs) of your right intentions: First [indication] is that, if truth is revealed from either your tongue or from the tongue of the opponent, it makes no difference to you. In other words, you are satisfied (content) in both cases that the truth has been revealed. Second indication [of your right intention] is that you consider it better to argue on this [issue with your opponent] in solitude [and not in front of an audience]. But if you argue [or debate] on an issue and if you are certain that you are correct and the opponent is only arguing [for the sake of arguing] then you beware and do not argue with him/her and end your discussion right at that point otherwise grudges [and resentments] will born out of this and no benefit [whatsoever] will be achieved.

Here I explain a benefit. You should know that to ask questions about [religious and spiritual] issues is like narrating the diseases of the heart and its causes in front of a doctor (curer) of the heart. Furthermore, the efforts made by this doctor (curer) to cure the diseases of the heart, are like responding to the questions asked about [various] issues. You should have the certainty that ignorant people are like those patients who have a sickness (disease) in their hearts and [true]

scholars are like doctors and curers. Imperfect scholars are not capable of curing [the diseases of the heart] and perfected scholar (*Shaykh al-Kamil*) can cure the diseases. Furthermore, [a perfected scholar] can find the [root] causes of the disease, but if the disease becomes worse and if its causes are not found then an expert doctor (curer) should be consulted who can tell that this disease can be cured and this disease cannot be cured with any medicine. To be indulged in curing an incurable disease like this is equivalent to wasting time. Now you should understand that:

**CATEGORIES OF PATIENTS:** Ignorant [people who are like] patients are of four kinds and among these [four] categories, the patients belonging to one category can be cured. The remaining three categories of patients are incurable.

First patient is the one who asks questions because of jealousy or who objects. Jealousy is such a lethal disease that has no cure. Just understand that whatever answer you will give, no matter how good it is, he/she will consider you an enemy and his/her fire of envy and jealousy will be further ignited. Therefore, it's better to not respond to this person. A poet has said something good in this respect:

*“Kullul ‘Adawati Qad Turja Izalatuha  
Illa ‘Adawata Mun ‘Aadaka Min Hasadin.”*

“Every kind of animosity can be rectified (corrected) but the animosity born out of jealousy is not possible to be rectified.”

Therefore, its solution is that you leave this jealous one so that he/she stays infected with this disease.

*“Fa ‘AaRid ‘Um Mun Tawalla ‘Un Zikrina Walam Yurid Illal Hayatad Dunya.”*

“So stay away from the individual who [because of jealousy] turns his/her face away from Our remembrance and desires nothing but [the pleasures of] the life of the world.”

Second kind of patient is the one whose cause of disease is the lack of intelligence and foolishness. This disease is also incurable. Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus, peace be upon him) said that I am [with the Permission of God] not incapable of bringing dead to life but I am incapable of curing the fools and the ignorant folks. Ignorant fool is the one who spends very little time acquiring knowledge and has not even started [learning] intellectual and transmitted religious knowledge but objects to those scholars who have spent their lifetime acquiring intellectual and transmitted religious knowledge. This individual has no knowledge that his/her objection is considered agonizing by this individual [even though he/she is not aware of it], others like him/her, and scholars. Likewise, undoubtedly, this objection must seem agonizing to the one who is a great scholar. This individual does not even know that the objection he is having on the scholar is of no avail (useless) [to him/her]. This great scholar's depth of knowledge and insights is not even known to him/her and to others like him/her. So if this person cannot even understand that (i.e. the knowledge and depth of understanding of the scholar) then it is his/her foolishness. One should stay away from this kind of person and should not even give [him/her] a response.

**ADVICE ACCORDING TO ONE'S COMPREHENSION:** Third kind of patient is the one who, due to his/her restlessness and impatience, do not understand the teachings of the spiritually elevated ones (saints) and keeps relying on his/her lack of intelligence, for whatever this individual understands, understands it according to his/her own interest (benefit). This [kind of] person is simpleminded and mindless and his/her mind is incapable of understanding the truth.



This kind of person should not even be given a response, because Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said:

“*Nahnu Ma’aashirul Anbiyaae Umirna Un Natakallamun Nasa ‘Ala Qadre ‘Uuqulihim.*”

“Our group of prophets have been ordered [by Allah] to talk to the people according to their minds (i.e. mental capacities/understandings).”

**INDIVIDUAL CAPABLE OF BENEFITING FROM ADVICE:** Fourth kind of patient is the one who is seeking the right path of guidance (*Sirat al-Mustaqeem*), is obedient, sharp and intelligent, and he/she should not have anger, following of the desires from the lower self (*Nafs*), jealousy, and desire for wealth and fame. Therefore, this person who is searching for the path of truth and for correct method (guidance), whatever question he/she asks or objections he/she makes is not due to jealousy or to find fault or to test. This type of person is that patient who can be cured. Therefore, to answer the questions of this person is not just legitimate but it’s obligatory (*Wajib*).

## 2. REALITY OF PREACHING

You are being admonished that you refrain from preaching and making speeches because there are great calamities and harms in it. If you think that whatever you preach you have already acted upon it, then keep this in mind also that Allah, the Exalted and the Truth, said to Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus – Peace be upon him):

“*Ya Ibna Maryama A’azee Nafsaka Fa In At-ta’azta Fa Izin Nasa Fustahyee Minni.*”

“O Son of Mary! You [should] admonish you self (*Nafs*) [first], then if it accepts your advice then give advices to others, otherwise have shame before Me.”

If such situations get created that you have to preach, then refrain from two things: Firstly, in your sermon refrain from colorful narrations, gestures and signs (secretive language), flowery and decorated language, pleasing poetry, illegal talk that is against the *Shari’ah* (Divine laws), and lies of [fake] Sufis (spiritually elevated individuals). It is because Allah, the Exalted, does not like those who are pretentious (showy). But if [some preacher’s sermon or talk] exceeds the boundaries of pretense and show (i.e. one is only trying to impress others with a seemingly eloquent language) then know that this preacher’s inner being (heart) is bad and his/her heart is heedless [of God’s remembrance]. Because the purpose of sermon (religious talk) is not to display one’s capabilities but it is to mention the punishment of the hereafter. It is to narrate one’s shortcomings in Allah’s servitude and to express regrets on useless endeavors and the life wasted [in useless pursuits]. It is to mention the difficult stages of the life hereafter that are obstacles in our way ahead. Likewise, it is to mention the method of passing through this world while keeping our faith (*Iman*) intact, the spectacle of the Angel of Death (*Malik ul-Maut*) at the time of death, the questioning in the grave by *Munkir Nakeer* (two angels that appear in the grave after burial), and to mention the stations of the Day of Judgment. In addition, the [fearsome] spectacle of accountability in the field of *Hashr* (a vast field where all humankind will be assembled after resurrection on the Day of Judgment), the weighing of [our] actions [that we did in the world] in *Mizaaan* (the mighty scale/balance created by the Almighty Allah for weighing our actions on the Day of Judgment), walking on the bridge [called] *Sirat* (a bridge over Hell which leads to the Paradise which is thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword on which all human beings will be made to walk) and crossing it, and to map other horrors of the Day of Judgment. The preacher should narrate all these matters of fear in front of the people and should inform them about these matters. Other than that, the people sitting in the gathering (audience) should be reminded of their [inner and outer] faults and shortcomings so that the fear of the

punishment of the hereafter is born in their hearts and to the greatest extent possible they should have regrets over the time they lost [in vain pursuits] and should try to make up for that (i.e. the lost time), and they should shed tears over the time spent without worship (God's remembrance). All these things that I mentioned above should be narrated in a sermon [or religious talk]. For instance, if the water from the flood reaches the door of someone's house creating such a threat that within seconds it could engulf the entire house and drown it along with his/her children. At that time [of an impending disaster just about to be unleashed], the owner of the house will scream in the house and will say "*Al-Hazr Al-Hazr*", this is, "Beware! Beware! Run quickly! Flood Water has arrived!". In a horrific time like this, the owner of the house will never mention the flood in colorful sentences, gestures and signs (secretive language), flowery and decorated language, or in an embellished colorful poetry. The example of the sermon should be like this (i.e. to have fear oneself and then instill that same fear of wrongdoings in others with a sense of extreme urgency as in the case of an impending disaster).

Secondly, while giving sermons (religious talks or preaching), one should not allow such thoughts to enter into one's heart that after listening to his/her sermon people will shout slogans of praise, become ecstatic, tear their clothes, raise a loud uproar in the gathering, and audience will start saying that the gathering was very good and that so-and-so gave a very good sermon. These kinds of thoughts are included in [pure] *Riya* (show off/display/ostentation/desire to impress others) and to be pleased with such things is a proof that you lack intelligence. In truth, your intention should be to summon God's creations from this world to the next, to summon them from sins (wrongdoings) to servitude [of God], from greed to the detachment of the heart from the world [and to adopt contentment], from miserliness to generosity, from ostentation (*Riya*) to sincerity (*Ikhlas* – doing things only seeking the Countenance of Allah), from arrogance to humility, from heedlessness [of Allah's remembrance] to consciousness (awareness of God), from pride to piety. Instill in their hearts the love of the life hereafter so that they get inclined towards the life hereafter. This way, disenchant their hearts from the world so that they will consider [the love and attachment of] the world an enemy [stopping them from realizing their full potential and the purpose for which Allah has sent them in this world]. In the same way, do not keep people in a [state of] deception about Allah's Plenitude and Mercy by misstating facts (saying wrongful things), but instead, create in them piety (fear of Allah) and God-consciousness and see (determine) what they have in their hearts which is against the approval of Allah and [see] what they are inclined towards which is against the *Shari'ah* (Divine Law) of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Along with it, keep an eye on their morality and deeds so that their wrongful deeds come to an end and are replaced with good morals (character and conduct) and good deeds. Those people who are dominated by the fear [of Allah], create in them so much hope that when they get up from your gathering, some [noble] inner qualities have been inculcated (born) in them and their exterior [demeanor and character] have been changed also. The people who were lazy in Allah's worship, should get inclined towards worshipping Allah [as a result of your preaching] and develop in their hearts a deep rooted desire for servitude of God and those who are daring and audacious (bold) in committing sins should get developed in them the fear of Allah. A sermon (religious talk) which is not like this and if the preacher (speaker) does not narrate these things, then it (the religious talk) will become a source of calamity for the preacher and the audience. This type of a person is a *Shaytan* (Satan) [who after becoming a slave of his/her degraded lower self, thinks that he/she will display his/her abilities in the sermon and will obtain the fame and grandeur of the world]. This *Shaytan* (Satan) misguides creations [of God] from the path of true guidance, sheds their blood, and involves them in an eternal destruction. The creations of God should stay far away from this individual. These people spread such a turmoil (*Fasad*) in religion that is not even spread by Satan (*Shaytan*). The person who has the power to get such preacher off the pulpit (*Minbar*), it is obligatory (*Wajib*) on him to get such people deliberately removed from the pulpit and to stop

them from giving sermons so that these people are not able to say wrong things about commanding right and forbidding evil (‘*Amr bil Ma’roof Wa Nahi ‘Anil Munkar*’).

### 3. STAYING AWAY FROM AFFLUENT AND KINGS (RULERS)

Third [admonition about things you should avoid] is that you should not [even] greet any king, any affluent, or any ruler and stay away from their proximity (company) and gatherings and more than that you should not even lift an eye to look at them. Because, in seeing them and in keeping their company, has many calamities hidden in them. But if ever you happen to be in their company by any chance, then refrain from praising them. [As a *Hadith* says:]

“*Fa InnAllaha Yaghdib Iza Mudihal Faasiqu Waz Zalimu Wa Iza Madaha Wa Mun Da’aa Li Zalimin Bitoolil Baqaaii Faqad Ahabba Aye Ya’siyAllahu Fil Arde.*”

“Verily, Allah, the Exalted, is angry when any transgressor (*Fasiq*) and an oppressor (*Zalim*) is praised and the one who prays for a long life for an oppressor, is as if he/she has liked that he/she walks on earth as a sinner.”

### 4. NOT ACCEPTING GIFTS FROM THE RULERS

Fourth [admonition about things you should avoid] is that you should not accept any gifts from rulers even though you know that what they are giving is from *Halal* (legal/permissible) sources. The reason for this is that to have an intention over their possessions causes great damage and turmoil in the *Deen* (the path to God/religion). The concessions and rewards that come from them, give birth to oppression, transgression, and sins which are a cause of damage to the *Deen* (the path to God/religion). The least [minimum] corruption that is born out of this is that you will start to love the oppressors and when a person loves another then he/she prays for a long life for them (the oppressors). If an oppressor has a long life then the oppression will continue longer and there will be more turmoil and corruption in the world and what can be worse than that? Beware! Beware! *Shaytan* (Satan) will misguide you and will create this thought in your heart, “First thing you should do is that take the money from these rulers and then distribute it among the indigents (poor) and cause them some comfort and fulfill their needs”. Beware! Never accept this kind of advice from any *Shaytan* (Satan) either from among the *Jinns* (an invisible creation of God who, if inclined towards evil, become Satan’s recruits in causing harm to the human beings by inciting them to evil) or from among the humans, and do not get trapped in their machinations (plots/conspiracies) to get deceived by them because Satan has spilled the blood of many using this strategy and still continues to spill blood. There are so many calamities embedded (hidden) within this fact that we have explained in our book “*Ahya al-Uloom ad-Deen*” (Revival of the Knowledge of the Path to God). You can search (find) them there.

## FOUR MATTERS WORTHY OF OUR ACTIONS

My dear beloved son! Refrain from the [above mentioned] four things but the things that you have to do are also four in number and it will be appropriate that you take full care of them. [These four things to do are:]

### 1. THE METHOD OF DEVELOPING AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH ALLAH

The first thing is that, every matter that is between you and Allah should be conducted [by you] in such a way that if your servant does the same for you then you, instead of being sad, will like it, commend it, and will not be in any way angry about it. Likewise, if there is anything you do not

like about your servant doing it for you, you should also realize that if you fell short in your servitude to your Lord then your Creator will also not like it. The reality that needs to be mentioned here [and the fundamental point that needs to be driven home here] is that your servant is not created by you but only hired by you. But you been created, raised (cherished), and owned by your Real Creator and Owner [whom you are a slave of, therefore, your obligation to not in any way displease your Lord either in thought, word, or deed, is tremendous].

## **2. THE METHOD OF RELATING TO THE SLAVES OF ALLAH**

The second thing is that every matter, that is between you and other slaves of Allah, should be conducted by you in such a way that if they do the same to you [what you are doing to them] then you will like it and will not be grieved by it. As it has been said [in a Holy *Hadith* (a tradition of Prophet Muhammad PBUH in which Allah is telling us something)]:

*“Fala Yakmalu Eemanu ‘Abdi Hatta Yuhibba Lisaa-irin Nasi Ma Yuhibba Li Nafsihi.”*

“My (Allah’s) slave’s faith (*Iman*) is never complete unless he/she likes for all human beings what he/she likes for himself/herself.”

## **3. AN INSISTENT ADVICE TO STUDY AND LEARN**

The third thing is that if you want to increase your knowledge and want to read (study) a scholarly book then think that your lifetime will be over in no more than a week. In this situation, [think and realize] what kind of knowledge will benefit you, so only indulge in that kind of knowledge. If you have the knowledge that your life will last for no more than a week, then in that week (i.e. in the last week of your life) you will never read such scholarly books in which you will learn things like [the art of] religious debates, argumentation, dictionary, linguistics and grammar, poetry, poetic collections, and essay writing. The reason for doing that [in the situation when your life ends in one week] is that you have developed an understanding that such knowledge will provide no benefit to you. For this reason, you will keep yourself busy the whole week with contemplation of the heart and recognizing the faults in your *Nafs* (self) [so that you can make amends wherever you can in the short time that is left]. You will turn your face away from the world [and the life therein] and after purifying your heart from all evil qualities and embellishing (decorating) it (your heart) with the love of Allah and with beautiful noble [inner] qualities, you will get busy with Allah’s worship and servitude. It is [even] possible that in any day or night of that [last] week [of your life] you will not even visit anyone even though [you know that] there is no likelihood of you dying on that very day or night.

My dear beloved son! Listen to one more thing, remember it, understand its reality, contemplate on it, and act on it, so this way you will certainly earn your salvation. If you are given the news and told that the next week the king will visit your house, then certainly in the whole week, you will not do any work other than having the obsession that king’s glance should not fall on such-and-such thing so I should clean it. In this way you will clean everything in your house, decorate everything and that includes your body, your dress, the walls and floors of your house, etc. You will clean all of these things. Now you should yourself think and understand! What should I explain to you about this hint? You yourself are intelligent so a hint should be enough for you. That’s why, Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said:

*“InnAllaha La Yunzuru Ila Suwarikum Wa La Ila ‘Aamalikum Wa Lakin Yunzuru Ila Qulubikum Wa Niyyatikum.”*

“Verily, Allah does not look at your faces and your actions but he looks at your hearts and your intentions.”

When the Supreme Ruler's (*Ahkamul Hakimeen*) sight is on your heart then why do you not purify your heart? If your desire is to acquire knowledge of the matters of the heart then you should study [my book] "*Ahya al-Uloom ad-Deen*" ("Revival of the Knowledge of the Path to God" also known as "Revival of Religious Learnings") and our other books, because to acquire such knowledge is personally obligatory (*Fard al-'ayn*) on all Muslims. To acquire other knowledge is a communal obligation (*Fard Kifaya* – an obligation on an entire community which is discharged by the entire community if there is a single group within the community that fulfills the communal obligation). But this knowledge should be acquired to such an extent so that you can obey the commandments of Allah, the Exalted. If Allah, the Exalted, grants you the *Tawfeeq* (capability/motivation) then you should necessarily acquire this knowledge.

#### 4. NOT STOCKPILING FOOD

The fourth thing is that you should not accumulate more than one year's provision for your family from the possessions of the world. Because Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) accumulated one year's worth of provision (food) for some of his wives and said:

"*Allahumma Aj'al Quta Aale Muhammadin Kafafun.*"

"O my Allah! Make this provision (food) sufficient for the family of Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)."

But Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not accumulate provisions (food) for all of his wives (*Azwaj al-Mutahharat*), but instead, he accumulated provisions (food) for one year for those of his wives (*Azwaj al-Mutahharat*) only whose reliance (*Tawakkul*) on Allah was weak. And for those *Ummahatil Mu'mineen* (Mothers of the Believers – the wives of the Prophet), whose certitude [in Allah] was perfect and had strong *Tawakkul* (reliance on Allah), for them the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not even accumulate even one day's worth of provisions. For instance, for 'Aisha Siddiqah (May Allah be pleased with her) and for other Mothers of Believers like her.

### A SUPPLICATION (DU'A) THAT CAN ALWAYS BE RECITED

My dear beloved son! In this book, I have answered all of your questions. Now you should gather courage and act on all of them and do not forget me in your supplications (*Du'a*). You have also desired that I should write a supplication (*Du'a*) for you [that you can always recite], so you should search for supplications in the book of *Ahadiith* (the traditions of Prophet Muhammad [Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him]) [especially] in *Sahah Sitta* (the six most authentic collections of the traditions of Prophet Muhammad [Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him]) and memorize them. Likewise, many supplications have come [to us] from the methods of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (the family of Prophet Muhammad [Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him]), so search for them there. Recite the following [supplication], in particular, after every prayer (*Salaat*):

"O my Allah! I desire from You the completion (abundance/perfection) of Your blessings and from purity (inner and outer) I desire its permanence and from Your mercy [I desire] its inclusion [in all matters] and from health [I desire] its attainment and from sustenance [I desire] its increase and from life [I desire] its happiness and from life [I desire] its real success and from good qualities [I desire] their completion and from your rewards [I desire] the reward which is the most common and from your plenitude [I desire] the plenitude which is the sweetest and from your favors [I desire] the favor which is the most plentiful and from deeds [I desire] the deed which is

the best and from knowledge [I desire] the knowledge which is the most beneficial and from the sustenance [I desire] the sustenance which is the most plentiful.

O my Allah! Be on our side (grant us benefits) and do not burden us (protect us from harms). O my Allah! Grant us salvation when we die and reform our deeds and grant us safety in your days and nights and grant us your mercy in our houses and in our possessions and cover our sins and fault with the cover of your forgiveness and do us favors by correcting all our faults [inner and outer] and give us confidence and reliance on You.

O my Allah! Grant us perseverance and persistence in our *Deen* (religion/Path to God). Save us from such deeds in the world that will become a source of shame (humiliation) on the Day of Judgment and lessen the burdens of our sins on us and grant us a life of the pious ones and be sufficient to us in all our affairs and protect us from the evil of the evildoers. Liberate us and our ancestors from the fire of Hell, from loans, and from oppression O You the Victorious One (*Ya Aziz*)! O You the Forgiving One (*Ya Ghaffar*)! O You the Generous One (*Ya Kareem*)! O You the Coverer of faults (*Ya Sattar*)! O You the Tolerant One (*Ya Haleem*)! O You the Powerful One (*Ya Jabbar*)! O You the Magnificent One (*Ya Azeem*)! O You the One Who Punishes (*Ya Qahhar*)! O Allah! O Allah! O Allah! O You the Compassionate One (*Ya Rahman*) in this world! O You the Merciful One (*Ya Raheem*) in the life hereafter! O You the Supreme Merciful One (*Ya Arhum ur-Rahimeen*)! You are the Grantor of the Excessive Mercy! And may the mercy and blessings of Allah always descend on Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who is the best of all [of God's] creations [from eternity to eternity] and on his descendants and on his companions. All praises are solely due to Allah the Lord of all the Universes (*Rabb ul-'Alameen*)."

This book comes to an end with the help of the Absolute Sovereign (*Al-Malik*) and the Giver of all (*Al-Wahhab*)!